

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE LEGISLATURE.

1874.



ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND SUPERINTENDENT
OF THE
BLIND INSTITUTE
TO THE
LEGISLATURE OF MISSISSIPPI,
SESSION OF 1874.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE LEGISLATURE.

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1874.

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LITERARY TEACHER,
Mrs. A. E. WHITFIELD.

MUSIC TEACHER,
Miss HELEN S. MERRILL.

TEACHER OF HANDICRAFT,
H. S. SMITH.

MATRON,
Mrs. HONORA FLETCHER.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

*To His Excellency, R. C. Powers,
Governor of the State of Mississippi:*

SIR—Accompanying this please find the Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Institute for the Blind of Mississippi, which I was directed by the Board of Trustees to place in the hands of your Excellency.

In the absence of any requirement of a report, by the Revised Code, from the Board of Trustees of the Institute, we do not attempt to lay before your Excellency any extended or formal statement of the affairs of the Institution placed under our care. Yet, the Board has directed me to state to you the reasons why the Institute is at this time pressed for means, as you will see that it is by the accompanying Annual Report of the Superintendent.

In former times, when the currency of the country was gold and silver, this Institute had an annual appropriation of eight thousand dollars. At that time the cost of living was far less, and the pupils attending the Institute were better able to furnish themselves with clothing, than at present.

At the present time, though the annual appropriation be ten thousand dollars, yet, on account of the discount on warrants, we are not able to realize for it more than seven thousand five hundred dollars in currency, and this, too, with the most advantageous sale of our warrants.

Now, when you take into account that in former times eight thousand dollars in gold was deemed a scanty appropriation, how can we now, when living is far higher, make the two ends meet with seven thousand five hundred dollars?

Formerly there was a special annual appropriation for insuring the buildings of the Institute; now there is no such special appropriation, and we have to insure the property at an annual cost of between three and four hundred dollars in warrants, out of our general appropriation. In addition, we have to furnish the pupils more clothing than ever before; we have done a good deal of repairing in various ways upon the buildings; and never before have we had so many of the mechanical arts carried on, or with such good success as we have at this time.

Taking all these things into consideration, your Excellency cannot be surprised to find the Institute pressed for means.

Should any investigation be made touching the details of the expenditure of the annual appropriation, ample satisfaction will be had by an examination of the vouchers in the hands of the Treasurer of the Board.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Board,

JOHN HUNTER,
Vice-President of Board.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT.

*To the Honorable Board of Trustees of the
Mississippi Institute for the Blind :*

GENTLEMEN—During the year 1873, twenty-five pupils, at different times, have received instruction in the Institution entrusted to your care. With very few exceptions these have been in attendance through all the school months of the year. A list of their names, with their post-offices, names of the counties in which they reside, ages and causes of blindness, is appended to this Report. The table is as complete as your Superintendent was able to make it.

The number with which we close the year, is twenty-one. As new pupils have usually entered this Institution in the latter part of the Session, we may reasonably expect this number to be increased in the Spring.

Of the pupils 13 have received instruction in music; all the males have received instruction in the trades; most of the females have received instruction in sewing, knitting and bead-work, and all have received instruction in the Literary Department, excepting Mr. D. B. Steele, whose age makes it desirable that his whole time be devoted to the trades.

Your Superintendent can, with pleasure, bear testimony to the good conduct of the pupils during the present session.

Three young Gentlemen, Messrs. T. C. Wiatt, J. C. White, and M. V. Whittington, now taking a final course of study in Mathematics and Moral Philosophy, will, at the close of this session, have finished learning the trades, and also advanced in literature as far as is practicable in an institution of this kind.

In August last, your former Superintendent, Mrs. S. B. Merrill, resigned the position which she had so long and successfully filled with unremitting toil and care. Her arduous labors are well and honorably known to you.

Your present Superintendent was elected, as you will remember, in August, and took charge of the Institution on the 1st of September. You elected also the following officers: Mrs. A. E. Whitfield, Literary Teacher; Miss Helen. S. Merrill, Music Teacher, and Mrs. Honora Fletcher, Matron. They entered upon the discharge of their duties and are laboring earnestly for the improvement and comfort of the pupils.

Mr. H. S. Smith, previously elected Teacher of Handicraft, has been constantly at his post, faithfully discharging his duties. The prosperity of that Department is evidence of your wisdom, both in the arrangement for its management and in the selection of its teacher.

The session was opened on the 1st of October, and has suffered no interruption. Only five pupils were present at the opening. The number increased to eighteen the first month, and subsequently to twenty-one. The studies now pursued in the Literary Department are, reading, spelling, writing, grammar, arithmetic (mental and written), algebra, geography, history, and moral philosophy. The trades taught are broom-making, mattress-making, and chair-seating. In the Music Department, besides instructions on the piano, lessons are given to a large vocal class. In every department encouraging progress has been made.

In surveying the work accomplished, and estimating the necessities of this Institution for the future, it is necessary to have a definite conception of the work which *ought* to be accomplished in an institution of this kind.

What, then, ought to be done?

1. The Blind ought to be so educated as to render them self sustaining in society, to elevate their moral character, and to ameliorate their misfortune. So far as these objects can be, by reasonable efforts and expenditures, they certainly ought to be

accomplished. I speak now of education only, for, while other means may be employed for the amelioration of their condition, this Institution, as every other similar one in the country, is for the education of the Blind. To make it useful as an Infirmary or as an Asylum, would undoubtedly destroy its uses as an educational institution.

But what is the education which should be given the Blind in an institution like this? I answer, such a literary education as the State generally gives to its seeing children, or as nearly such as is possible; that is, the ordinary High-school education, a limit beyond which only the smallest proportion of pupils can be advanced in any institution of this kind.

2. But the State should give, in other directions, more education to its blind than to its seeing children. Those capable of proficiency in it should receive instruction in music. Besides exerting an excellent moral influence, and adding something to the small number of their pleasures, music will afford to some of the blind the means of self-support. Therefore let no one think the expense of instruction in music a needless one in our Institution. As of the seeing, only a small proportion of the blind can make profitable attainments in music. But this small number should receive the best advantages which can be afforded. The great efforts now being made to print music for the blind cannot fail of success, and soon, much greater facilities than they have heretofore enjoyed for the study of music, will be offered to our pupils.

A variety of instruments ought also to be used. But few of our pupils will have access to pianos in after life, and less expensive instruments might prove far more useful to them. Some could find paying employment if instructed in organ music. Others might use the flute or violin profitably, or at least pleasantly.

3. Next to a thorough elementary education in letters, instruction in *trades* is most important to the Blind. They must, if possible, be prepared to make an honest living by honest work. And that this is possible, is an established fact. The trades taught in this Institution are successfully practiced in every part of the country by the blind.

In regard to female pupils the Work Department is more difficult. It cannot be expected that all blind girls will be self-supporting. Not all seeing girls are so. But a fair pro-

portion of our female pupils can be so educated as to be independent; and all of them can be so educated as to be measurably useful at home. I have, therefore, as did your former Superintendent, endeavored to have them instructed in sewing, knitting and general housework.

4. Finally, all the blind of the State, of suitable ages and health for education, should be brought into this Institution. There are probably 113 persons of school age among the blind of Mississippi, but a small proportion of whom are receiving the benefits of the Institution prepared for them.

How are these objects to be attained?

As to the one last mentioned, the answer is difficult. The inaccessibility of the blind, resulting from a failure in many to appreciate education, and from an extreme tenderness in parents for their blind children, has perplexed their friends in every part of the country. Whatever would acquaint parents of blind children with the advantages offered gratuitously here, and with your own watchful care over the pupils, would give confidence to parents and disarm their fear in sending their unfortunate loved ones to this Institution. I think that the employment of some devoted and energetic blind man as an agent for this work, would be wise. If a fixed amount were paid him for each pupil brought in, the expense would be small in comparison with the benefit obtained.

It would also be of great advantage if the Legislature would revive so much of the Act of 1856 "For the Benefit of the Blind," (see Chap. 128, Sec. 2,) as may require "The Assessors of the several counties in this State to furnish the President of the Board of Trustees a list of the names of all the blind persons in their respective counties, together with their condition and address."

For the Music Department I would recommend the purchase of a cabinet organ. This instrument is greatly needed, offering, as it does, more prospective advantage than almost any other to the blind.

For our workshops, an appropriation is imperatively needed. They are so extremely uncomfortable that the health of the pupils is constantly endangered.

Besides, we have but one broom-machine, and that a very indifferent one—indeed worn out. I most earnestly request that an appropriation be asked from the State for repairing the shops and for a new broom-machine.

In the literary department, yourselves have seen the desirableness of fixing definitely the course of instruction, and, whenever that course has been finished by a pupil, of honorably discharging that pupil, with a certificate of graduation in the prescribed studies.

Additional educational apparatus is absolutely necessary. We must have maps, globes, and a larger supply of elementary books.

I need scarcely remind you that the entire property of the Institute is going to decay for want of repairs. If it is to be preserved, it *must* be painted and repaired; otherwise it will soon be so dilapidated as to be well nigh worthless. The stated appropriation, about \$7,500 in currency, is not sufficient for more than the current expenses of the Institute. I cannot but believe that the facts placed before the Legislature of this State, always ready to foster its charitable institutions, will secure the appropriation needful to save this property and make its inmates comfortable.

Besides, we must anticipate that at an early date the number of pupils will be increased. That there will soon be applicants from the colored people we cannot doubt; and additional apartments must be fitted up in anticipation of their coming. A few more pupils than we now have will crowd the rooms which are habitable.

The following estimates for the immediate necessities of the Institute will, I hope, receive your approbation, and be favorably considered by the Legislature:

For the purchase of a cabinet organ.....	\$ 375 00
For the purchase of maps and globes.....	450 00
Repairing shops and purchase of one machine.....	325 00
Repairing servant's rooms	325 00
Finishing two rooms and putting in stairway.....	250 00
Painting and repairing main building.....	1200 00
Repairing fence.....	500 00
Total.....	\$3425 00

As stated in the annual report for last year, "the Asylum has for some years been several months in arrears in regard to expenses." This indebtedness is a very serious hindrance to the proper management and prosperity of the Institute. Nor do I see how this debt can be liquidated except by a special

appropriation. I hope, therefore, that such an appropriation will be petitioned for—say \$2,500—making the entire sum for the relief of the Institute, \$5,925.

The expense of educating the blind is necessarily great. A large proportion of them are poor, and more helpless than the seeing. In giving them tuition, the State does for them only what it does for its seeing children. But they must also be fed and clothed while being educated. If the indigent blind remained at home they would be fed and clothed at the expense of the several counties in which they are resident. As it is, the fund appropriated for paying their teachers must also pay their board, their medical aid, and their clothing. Hence the expenses are large, and must continue so. Other States have found it wise to require the counties from which the indigent come to pay their traveling expenses to and from the institutions for the blind, and also for their clothing while in such institutions.

Still, the Commonwealth should not shrink from the duty which Divine Providence has imposed upon it in regard to its blind children. They must be fed, often clothed, and taught, by those whom God has blessed with sight, except so far as they can be enabled, by education, to support themselves. To make them self-supporting is the grand object of your noble Institute. And in the attempt to make them so we have much encouragement. During the summer vacation, two pupils of this Institute, Messrs. T. C. Wiatt and J. C. White, industriously working at their trades, made handsome profits. At the recent State Fair, held in this city, premiums were awarded to two of our pupils—to Mr. D. B. Steele for brooms, and to Mr. M. V. Whittington for chair-seating.

But in a nobler sense the blind are here made self-supporting. By the culture of their minds and their manners, their usefulness in society is so increased that they are worthy of a place in the homes and hearts of the people, which will rarely be denied them.

Above all, let it be remembered that nothing can be more worthy of an enlightened and Christian Commonwealth than a generous care of its unfortunate children.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, in October last, of twenty-three volumes, donated to this Institute by the

American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, Ky. Also, the following periodicals have been generously furnished to the Institute by their publishers:

Daily Mississippi Pilot, Jackson, Mississippi.

Weekly Clarion, " "

Dwight's Musical Journal, Boston, Massachusetts.

Appleton's Journal, New York, N. Y.

Hoping that a beneficent Providence may ever guard the Institute, for which you have so constantly and faithfully toiled,

I remain, very respectfully yours,

THEO. WHITFIELD,

Superintendent.

CATALOGUE OF PUPILS.

NAMES OF PUPILS.	POST-OFFICE.	COUNTY.	CAUSE OF BLINDNESS.	AGE.
Dossett, Penelope E...	Arkabutla...	Tate.....	Inflamati'n	22
Graves, Florence A....	Midway.....	Ilinds.....	Sore eyes	15
Hickman, C. A. Eudora	Summit.....	Pike.....	Born blind	11
Jones, Lmary E.....	Liberty.....	Amite.....	Accident...	16
Miles, Mary F.....	.....	Winston..	Born blind	22
Beaird, George W.	Pelahatchie ..	Rankin ...	Fits	18
McGhee, Hawkins C....	Summit.	Pike	Born blind	29
McKeever, William....	Shubuta	Clark.....	Born blind	15
Marcum, Sallie I.....	Holly Springs	Marshall ..	Small-pox.	14
Neal, Ida.....	Port Gibson.	Jefferson..	.....	..
Spikes, Emma G.....	Bigbee Fork.	Lee.....	Sore eyes..	18
Walker, Anna E.....	Wesson.....	Copiah ...	Cataract ..	19
Walker, Wm. Dennis..	Harrisville ..	Simpson ..	Sickness ..	21
Watson, Mary.....	Shubuta	Clark	Fever	19
Whittington, Alice....	Hickory Flat	Benton ...	Born blind	17
Whittington, M. V. B..	Hickory Flat	Benton ...	Born blind	32
White, Q. A. Hasseltine	Wesson.	Copiah ...	Born blind	21
White, Jephtha C.....	Wesson.	Copiah ...	Born blind	..
Whitton, William T....	Houlka	Chickasaw.	Accident..	20
Wiatt, Thomas C.....	Lake Como..	Jasper	Accident..	28
Wilbourn, Helen.....	Oxford .....	.....	.....	..
Zachry, J. Robert.....	.....	.....	Fever.....	16
Stamps, J.....	.....	.....	.....	..
Steele, D. B.....	Summit.....	Pike.....	Accident..	38
Burrell, Howard	Carthage.....	.....	.....	..

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
TREASURER.

To His Excellency, R. C. Powers,

Governor of the State of Mississippi:

SIR: I have the honor herewith to submit my report as Treasurer of the Blind Asylum for the year 1873, showing a balance due me of \$208 40, as per vouchers in my hands, subject to your or the proper authorized parties' inspection.

I have in my hands accounts allowed by the Board of Trustees, to the amount of \$1,984 58, and which, no doubt, constitutes a full list of the indebtedness of this Institution, and which can be nearly paid by the quarter appropriation now due, but not yet drawn. The amount paid out, as per voucher, \$8,428 26; the proceeds of the ten thousand dollar appropriation for the year in warrants realized the sum of \$8,219 86, leaving the balance of \$208 40 due me on account of the Asylum for the fiscal year 1873; all of which is respectfully submitted.

Your obedient servant,

JOHN W. ROBINSON,

Treasurer Blind Asylum.

JACKSON, Miss., January 1, 1874.

BLIND ASYLUM, in Account with J. W. Robinson Treasurer.

1873.		Dr. || 1873.		Cr.	
Jan.	1	Balance due.....	\$51 49		
"	14	\$2,500 S. W.....	2,164 37		
April	21	2,500 S. W.....	1,986 25		
July	10	2,500 S. W.....	2,003 37		
Nov.	10	2,500 S. W.....	2,014 38		
Balance due Treasurer....			8,219 86		
			208 40	\$8,428 26	
				Balance due.....	\$208 40
					\$8,428 26

BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

PRESIDENT,

GEORGE RIDGLEY C. POWERS.

VICE-PRESIDENT,

REV. JOHN HUNTER.

TREASURER,

JOHN W. ROBINSON.

CLERK,

A. VIRDEN.

HON. GEO. L. POTTER. DR. T. J. MITCHELL.

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